

REMARKS

In accordance with the foregoing, claims 2 and 8 are amended. No new matter is added. Claims 1-18 are pending and under consideration.

ALLOWABLE CLAIMS

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the indication that claims 1, 9-14, 17 and 18 are allowed, and that claim 8 would be allowed if rewritten in independent form.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103:

Claims 2-4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,280,542 to Ozeki et al. (hereinafter "Ozeki") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,917,940 to Okajima et al. ("Okajima") and U.S. Patent No. 6,415,051 to Callari et al. ("Callari"). Claims 5-7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Ozeki, Okajima and Callari as applied to claim 4, in further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,307,419 to Tsujino ("Tsujino"). Claims 15 and 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Ozeki, Okajima and Callari as applied to claim 2, in further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,137,902 to Kinoshita ("Kinoshita").

Independent claim 2 is amended herewith to further specify the manner in which the information combining unit of the three-dimensional visual sensor generates the new three-dimensional information when combining information acquired by said two-dimensional information acquiring unit and information acquired by said three-dimensional information acquiring unit. The additional features of claim 2 are based on claim 8 which was indicated as allowable. No new matter is added. The claim amendments are further supported by the originally filed specification, for example, FIG. 7 and the corresponding description in the specification.

The cited prior art references, Ozeki, Okajima, Callari, Tsujino and Kinoshita, alone and in combination do not render obvious the information combining unit as recited in amended claim 2. Therefore, claims 2 and claims 3-8, 15 and 16 depending directly or indirectly from claim 2 are patentable.

CONCLUSION

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

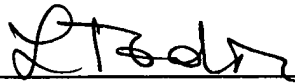
Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

STAAS & HALSEY LLP

Date: Oct. 20, 2008

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